



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
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MISSOURI NEEDS TO ATTRACT BUSINESS, NOT SCARE IT AWAY BY MAKING IT MORE EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE IN THIS STATE

It's ironic that at a time when Missouri is struggling to recover from its worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, Gov. Bob Holden has chosen to call a special session in an attempt to force the Legislature into closing what he calls "corporate loopholes." I believe that increasing the cost of doing business in our state is exactly the wrong approach to take.

Lawmakers will return to the Capitol on Monday, Sept. 8, for the special session, which will coincide with the annual veto session scheduled to begin on Wednesday. The governor is seeking four specific tax changes – all of which the legislature previously rejected – and has said that the money is needed to boost funding for education in Missouri. It's estimated that the changes would provide about \$44 million in the current fiscal year and as much as \$80 million in the next full fiscal year.

However, it is not going to help Missouri's education to hurt Missouri's businesses.

In order to secure a better future for education, we must secure a better atmosphere for Missouri's businesses.

In the last two years, Missouri has lost more jobs than any other state in the nation. It is certainly not going to help attract new companies if we make it more expensive to do business in our state.

Attracting new business is exactly what Missouri needs to do. We need more businesses, which in turn will employ more people who will pay taxes, which support our state.

A number of the governor's vetoes showed an equally unfriendly attitude toward business. During the veto session, lawmakers will attempt to override several of these vetoes including tort reform, concealed weapons and an abortion-waiting period.

Overriding a governor's veto is not an easy task since it requires 23 votes in the Senate and 109 votes in the House of Representatives. There have only been seven overrides in Missouri's history, most recently in 1999 when Gov. Mel Carnahan's veto of a bill banning partial birth abortions was successfully overridden.

That particular bill had strong bipartisan support, which is also the case of many of the bills vetoed this year.

Issues such as tort reform and the establishment of a Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board – both of which I co-sponsored – would play an important role in pulling Missouri out of recession. I was troubled by the governor's veto of these two bills and will fight to have both vetoes overturned.

Passage of these measures was a bipartisan effort and marked politics at its best. The governor had no legitimate reason to veto either bill, and his actions demonstrate politics at its worst.

I hope that in the future Gov. Holden will work with lawmakers to promote the growth of business in Missouri, which will in turn put more Missourians to work.

I will keep you updated on the special session/veto session as events unfold.

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